



CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF NUTRITION AND AGING SERVICE PROVIDERS

Testimony to the Aging Committee

In Support of House Bill 5336 AA Increasing Funding for Elderly Nutrition

Tuesday March 6th, 2012

Senator Prague, Representative Serra, and members of the Aging Committee, my name is Joel Sekorski and I am here today to speak in favor of HB 5336 An Act Increasing Funding for Elderly Nutrition. The Connecticut Association of Nutrition and Aging Service Providers (CANASP), known more commonly as the Elderly Nutrition Programs, provide home delivered and congregate meals to elderly individuals statewide.

As members of the Aging Committee, I know you are well aware of the complexity involved in receiving services as a person ages, and we know that services provided to help aging individuals remain in the comfort of their own homes are of utmost importance. Elderly Nutrition Programs are one of the most basic services to be provided at low cost and the benefits of this program are monumental. Elderly Nutrition Programs not only provide the more obvious benefit of daily nutritional meals, but they are a key element in helping to prevent premature institutionalization. Elderly Nutrition Programs help to prevent or prolong the more costly options within the long term care system such as hospitalizations, nursing home care, or home based nursing care. There is also the added benefit of providing a sense of security for elderly individuals and their family members who know that with the frequent delivery of meals, a person will be checking in and able to evaluate the general environment to ensure the person remains healthy and safe.

The funding stream for Elderly Nutrition Programs is complicated and at times inconsistent. We rely on both federal and state funding, as well as private donations and suggested client contributions for meals delivered. As you know, the state has essentially flat funded our programs for many years now. While we recognize flat funding is better than a cut, it remains difficult because our private donations and client contributions have decreased and our costs to administer the program have gone up. The price of gas and food continues to rise, and that can provide for a stressful environment when operating under a flat funding stream. CANASP is continuously working to find creative ways of bringing in money, such as looking at legislation to add a donation check off box on state income tax filing forms, and working with local grocery stores to participate in the "buy a wheel" program.

For the many reasons I have listed CANASP would like to thank the committee for raising this important bill to increase funding for elderly nutrition. The effort and acknowledgment on your part that this is such an important service is greatly appreciated. We would be happy to work with the committee to offer any more information or ideas you might need to ensure this program can continue to provide meals to as many individuals as possible.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Joel Sekorski
President, CANASP